

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 122412 TOSEC 020005

NODIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT MADRID 3582 ACTION SECSTATE DTD 26 MAY

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S E C R E T MADRID 3582

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, OVIP (PRINCE JAUN CARLOS), SP

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH PRINCE JUAN CARLOS

1. I CALLED ON PRINCE JUAN CARLOS MORNING MAY 26 FOR
GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS PRIOR TO PRESIDENT'S VISIT.

2. JUAN CARLOS SAID HE AND PRINCESS WERE LOOKING FOR-
WARD TO MEETING THE PRESIDENT AND MRS FORD. HE PARTIC-
ULARLY LOOKED FORWARD TO A PRIVATE MEETING WITH THE
PRESIDENT AS HE WANTED TO EXPRESS HIS VIEWS ON THE
PRESENT SITUATION AND HOW HE SAW MATTERS EVOLVING IN
SPAIN. HE WAS QUITE FRANK TO ADMIT THAT THE FACT OF
SUCH PRIVATE MEETING WOULD BE OF GREAT HELP TO HIM AND
HIS IMAGE IN SPAIN.

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EM JUAN CARLOS WAS IN HIS USUAL FRUSTRATED MOOD OVER THE LACK OF EVOLUTION IN THIS COUNTRY, BOTH AS TO TRANSITION AND "LIBERALIZATION". THE SITUATION WAS DRIFTING WITHOUT A CLEAR SENSE OF DIRECTION OR ANY FIRM DECISIONS. THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE COMPETITION AMONG THE VARIOUS LOCI OF POWER OVER THE DIRECTION OF INTERNAL POLICY AND FRANCO'S GRIP HAD OBVIOUSLY WEAKENED. JUAN CARLOS SAID THAT RECENTLY PRIME MINISTER ARIAS HAD TOLD FRANCO THAT HE (ARIAS) COULD NOT GO ON MUCH LONGER PERFORMING AS A "TIGHT ROPE ARTIST". IF FIRM DECISIONS WERE NOT MADE ON FURTHER EVOLUTION, THE SITUATION COULD DETERIORATE. ARIAS TOLD THE PRINCE THAT FRANCO HAD NOT REPLIED.

4. JUAN CARLOS INDICATED THAT HE RECENTLY HAD EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN TO INTERIOR MINISTER GARCIA HERNANDEZ (WHO IS INCREASINGLY REGARDED AS A HARDLINER) OVER THE LACK OF ANY POLITICAL PROGRAM WITH RESPECT TO THE BASQUE AREA. JUAN CARLOS BELIEVED THAT IF A PROGRAM COULD BE DEVELOPED WHICH WAS SUFFICIENTLY APPEALING, THIS MIGHT ISOLATE THE SEPARATISTS AND REDUCE TERRORISM.

5. WITH REGARD TO FRANCO, JUAN CARLOS SAID THAT FRANCO'S DOCTOR HAD URGED THE PRINCE (INCLUDING AS RECENTLY AS YESTERDAY) TO COME FAIRLY OFTEN TO SEE FRANCO. JUAN CARLOS SAID THAT FRANCO'S FAMILY WAS LARGELY IGNORING HIM AND LEAVING HIM ALONE, AND THE DOCTOR BELIEVED IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF JUAN CARLOS CAME SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK TO CHEER HIM UP. WHEN I COMMENTED THAT I HAD BEEN SURPRISED AT FRANCO'S ABILITY AT THE "VICTORY PARADE" MAY 25 TO REMAIN STANDING UP TAKING THE SALUTE FOR OVER ONE AND A HALF HOURS, JUAN CARLOS SAID THIS WAS DONE BY SHEER WILL POWER. WHEN FRANCO RETURNED TO THE PARDO PALACE, THE PRINCE HAD WATCHED HIM GETTING OUT OF HIS CAR AND THIS HAD BEEN A LONG AND PAINFUL PROCESS.

6. JUAN CARLOS SAID HIS PRINCIPAL CONCERN REMAINED THAT THE LONGER THE TRANSITIONAL PROCESS TOOK PLACE, THE MORE WASTING AN ASSET HE WOULD BE AND THE MORE PRECARIOUS THE POST-FRANCO SITUATION. HE HAD BEEN ADVISED BY A NUMBER OF PEOPLE (INCLUDING GISCAR D'ESTAING) THAT HE SHOULD

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LEAVE SPAIN FOR A WHILE TO SHOW HIS DISPLEASURE OVER THE PRESENT STAGNATION. HE FELT, HOWEVER, THAT AT A MOMENT WHEN HE WAS BECOMING BETTER KNOWN THROUGHOUT SPAIN AND WAS INCREASINGLY ACCEPTED AS THE ONLY VIABLE SUCCESSION TO FRANCO (IF HE DID NOT HAVE TO WAIT TOO LONG), HIS PROLONGED ABSENCE FROM SPAIN WOULD BE RESENTED.

7. FINALLY, JUAN CARLOS SAID HE WANTED TO STRESS THAT HE

REGARDED SPAIN'S RELATIONS WITH THE US AS AN ESSENTIAL
ELEMENT IN SPANISH FOREIGN POLICY AND THAT HE WOULD DO
EVERYTHING HE COULD TO FOSTER A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP. HE
INTENDED TO MAKE THIS POINT VERY CLEARLY TO THE PRESIDENT.
STABLER UNQTE INGERSOLL

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